

METHAMPHETAMINE

INTOXICATION, DETOXIFICATION,
WITHDRAWAL AND TREATMENT

DEFINITIONS

(ADAPTED FROM THE DSM-14-TR)

■ INTOXICATION

- * Development of a reversible syndrome due to recent ingestion of a substance.
- * Significant maladaptive behavior or psychological changes that are due to the effect of the substance on the CNS and develop during or shortly after the use of a substance

WITHDRAWAL

- Development of a syndrome due to cessation of or reduction in substance use that has been heavy and prolonged.
- The syndrome causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to significant impairment or distress as manifested by one or more of the following symptoms occurring within a 12 month period:

1. Failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home.
2. Recurrent use in situations in which it is physically hazardous
3. Recurrent substance related legal problems
4. Continued use despite persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused by or exacerbated by the effects of the substance.

SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE

Defined as a maladaptive pattern of use leading to significant impairment or distress as manifested by 3 or more of the following occurring at any time in the same 12 month period:

1. Increased tolerance
2. Withdrawal
3. Use more than intended
4. Unable to cut down – loss of control

DEPENDENCE, CONT'D

- 5. Great deal of time spent obtaining ,using, and recovering from the substance
- 6. Important activities given up
- 7. Continued use despite negative consequences

METH INTOXICATION

Methods of use

- Swallowed in pill or capsule form – euphoria in 15-20 minutes
- Snorted into the nose – effects in 3-5 minutes
- Smoked – immediate effect
- Injected – immediate effect

Duration of effects vary from 4-24 hours

Use characterized by binges

SYMPTOMS OF INTOXICATION

Behavioral

- “High feeling: followed by euphoria
- Enhanced vigor and alertness
- Gregarious, talkative, grandiose
- Hyperactive, “wired”, “tweaked out”
- Restless and hypervigilant
- Interpersonal sensitivity or irritability
- Increased or decreased sexual desire
- Anxiety, tension, nervousness

Behavioral symptoms, Cont'd

- Repetitive behaviors, repeats meaningless tasks
- Unpredictable, labile moods
- Anger, fighting and aggression
- Impaired judgment
- Increased risk of MVA
- Impaired social or occupational functioning

Behavioral symptoms, Cont'd

- Auditory, visual or tactile illusions
- Disturbing skin sensations “Crank bugs”
- Compulsive jaw clenching or movements
- Chronic intoxication may result in a blunt affect, fatigue, sadness and social withdrawal.

SYMPTOMS OF INTOXICATION

Physical

- Rapid or slow heart rate
- Dilated pupils
- Elevated or lower blood pressure
- Sweating or chills
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weight loss
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Muscular weakness, spasms, tremors

Physical symptoms, Cont'd

- Respiratory depression
- Chest pain, pulse irregularities
- Insomnia
- Decreased appetite
- Confusion
- Extreme rise in body temperature
- Seizures
- Coma

DETOXIFICATION

- The process of ridding the body of the effects of Meth and normalizing physical and behavioral function.
- The length of the process depends on the characteristics of the period of use and the physical condition of the user.

DETOXIFICATION

- The most common symptoms are:
 - * Gradual reversal of the pleasurable feelings induced by the drug
 - * Depressed mood
 - * Increased need for sleep, fatigue
 - * Anxiety and nervousness
 - * Increased appetite

WITHDRAWAL

Symptoms develop within a few hours to several days after cessation of or reduction in heavy and prolonged use of meth.

Depressive symptoms may last several days to weeks and may be accompanied by suicidal ideation and feelings of hopelessness.

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

- Dysphoric mood
- Fatigue
- Vivid and unpleasant dreaming
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Increased appetite
- Psychomotor retardation or agitation
- Anhedonia – loss of interest and joy in life

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

- Drug craving
- “Crashing” – intense and unpleasant feelings of lassitude and depression
- Requires several days of rest and recuperation
- Evidence of weight loss
- Marked increase in appetite and rapid weight gain

SHORT TERM HEALTH HAZARDS

- Rapid increase in tolerance leads to risk of dependence
- Alteration in brain chemistry and nerve endings
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure and cause irreversible damage to blood vessels in the brain, producing strokes
- Respiratory problems
- Irregular heart beat, cardiovascular collapse and death
- Extreme loss of appetite and weight loss, anemia
- Increased risk of Hepatitis B and C, HIV and STD's

Short term health hazards, Cont'd

- High body temperature resulting in seizures and death
- Acute lead poisoning in contaminated Meth
- Complications of pregnancy including premature birth, low birth weight, altered infant behavior patterns, abnormal reflexes, extreme irritability, poor feeding, lethargy.
- Skin ulcerations and infections
- Teeth grinding, decay, discolored teeth, gum disease
- Hair loss

LONG TERM HEALTH HAZARDS

- Dependence (addiction)
- Fatal kidney and lung disorders
- Brain damage
- Liver damage
- Blood clots
- Lowered resistance to illness
- Chronic depression, hallucinations and suicidal ideation
- Confusion
- Violent and aggressive behavior, rages, homicidal ideation

Long Term Hazards, Cont'd

- Malnutrition
- Aged appearance
- Psychosis, paranoia, or schizophrenic-like mental disorders which may persist for months or years after use has ceased
- Progressive social and occupational dysfunction
- Incarceration
- Death

TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

- Treatment for meth dependence is effective
- People do learn to live drug free and recover
- Supportive medical interventions during acute detoxification and withdrawal are effective

TREATMENT AND RECOVERY, CONT'D

- Meth treatment Ongoing psychiatric care with antidepressant drug therapy may be effective in recovery
- needs to be longer than traditional alcohol/drug treatment programs
- The users thinking, expectancies and behaviors need to be modified to increase skills in dealing with life.
- 12 Step recovery programs offer long-term support and return to a drug free lifestyle
- Appropriate referrals for community support essential
- Family involvement in recovery increases effectiveness

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